

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO<sub>x</sub>, said catalyst absorbing NO<sub>x</sub> when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO<sub>x</sub> when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO<sub>x</sub> arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO<sub>x</sub> when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO<sub>x</sub> when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich; and

bypassing means to make possible the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter downstream said catalytic apparatus.

3. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein during the recovery process of the SO<sub>x</sub> pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO<sub>x</sub> pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)